

NOTE TO THE FIRST ARTICLE IN THE OCTOBER NUMBER.

A LETTER has been addressed to us, in the name of certain Belgian Catholics, demurring to an expression which we used in our last number. These were our words (p. 283) :— "In the Brief to M. Périn which we translated last April, Pius IX. affirms that those who 'obstinately adhere' in principle to the liberties of 1789 'place their own private judgment above the teachings of the Church.'" The Belgian Catholics in question think that, by our qualifying words "in principle," we have attenuated the full force of Pius IX.'s words. We confess we had no such misgiving ourselves; and the less so, because we expressly referred to a translation which we had given in a former number of the entire Brief. The passage of the Brief runs as follows in its integrity :—

Would to God that these truths had been understood by those, who boast that they are Catholics, although obstinately adhering to liberty of conscience, liberty of worship, liberty of the press, and to other liberties of the same kind, promulgated and decreed at the close of the last century by the Revolutionists, and constantly condemned by the Church; by those (we say) who adhere to these liberties, not only in such sense that they can be tolerated, but in such sense that they can be considered as rights, that they must be favoured and defended as necessary to the present condition of things, and to the march of progress; as if all that is opposed to true religion, all that gives self-government to man, all that frees him from Divine authority, all that opens the way to every error, could give to peoples prosperity, progress, and renown.

It still seems to us, that in these words Pius IX. censures those who adhere *in principle* to the liberties of 1789, as *distinct* from those, "who adhere to those liberties in such sense that they can be tolerated" *in practice*. We think that this is the distinction, to which our words in their obvious sense would be understood to refer; and that the distinction is a just one. We can assure our Belgian friends, that they cannot themselves be more unwilling than we are, to minimize in any way the legitimate force of any Pontifical utterance.

CATHOLIC LIBERALISM.

Translated from an Article by F. RAMIÈRE, S. J., in the "Etudes" of September, 1875.

[WE are sure our readers will think we have done them service, by translating F. Ramière's two articles on "Catholic Liberalism," of which the first appeared in our number of last July, and the second here follows. The error, called "Catholic Liberalism" or "Liberal Catholicism" or by whatever other name, has throughout had its chief seat in France; and in France there has been so much violence of language not on one side only but on both, that it is at times somewhat difficult to see what the precise tenet is around which the battle rages. We are thus led to value the more two prominent characteristics of F. Ramière's polemic. In the first place, we cannot eulogize too highly the singular generosity and appreciativeness of his language in regard to those illustrious men, who have been unhappily among the chief upholders of the error; and in the second place he is at much pains to lay down and keep before his mind the precise point in which the error consists. Particularly he labours to remove one widely-spread misconception, which has grievously injured the true cause. He points out, that the tenet which he combats has no concern whatever with any question concerning the different forms of civil government; that the most ardent republican may entirely renounce it, no less than the most devoted Bourbonite. For the question turns exclusively on the due relations between Church and State; and is in no respect affected, whether any given State be monarchically, democratically, or however otherwise governed.

That Catholic doctrine, which "Liberal Catholicism" denies or prejudices, may be called "the doctrine of Christ's social sovereignty;" and may be thus stated with sufficient accuracy for our present purpose. Christ is sovereign over human society, no less than over human individuals; and religious truth therefore possesses of right certain privileges in the temporal order, which religious error does not possess. This doctrine (as has been repeatedly pointed out by its defenders) is in no way inconsistent with a full admission, that where Catholic unity has been unhappily broken up, the modern "liberties" are in some sense the necessary result of such a calamity. But the Catholic doctrine certainly does imply, that the necessitated existence of these liberties is a sure mark of social corruption and degradation.

It seems to us undeniable (though F. Ramière in the following article seems to doubt it) that the doctrine of Christ's social sovereignty has been denied almost in so many words by those Catholics, who in the early part of this century clamorously proclaimed what they were pleased to call "the great principle of civil and religious liberty." But, as

F. Ramière importantly points out, many Catholics may shrink from so extreme a position, and yet may threaten the Catholic doctrine with grave peril. Such persons do not deny perhaps in the abstract, that the Church possesses of right certain privileges in the temporal order, as against every form of religious error ; but they imply that such privileges cannot be expediently or even justly possessed in practice, except during some period of ignorance and barbarism. It is hardly possible however that earnest and thoughtful men can remain content with this position, if they are once induced to look it in the face. Such a view implies, that true and desirable civilization advances in a course, which makes it more and more difficult to apply in practice a certain Catholic doctrine. That civilization which is really a blessing must move in harmony with Catholicity, and not in opposition to it ; nor do we see how one who thinks otherwise can consistently remain a Catholic at all.

We may be allowed to remind our readers of an article in this REVIEW (January, 1872, art. 6), in which the doctrine of Christ's social sovereignty was set forth, without admixture (we trust) of violence or exaggeration, and with special reference to Lord Macaulay's well-known objections.

For our own part we wish a habit would become more prevalent, which a few French writers have started, of calling the error with which we are engaged "Mennaisianism" or some such name, after Lamennais ; who, as F. Ramière observes, was the first Catholic to advocate it prominently and systematically. There are so many different meanings which may be attached to the phrase "Liberal Catholicism" or "Catholic Liberalism," that a more definite terminology is greatly to be desired.

In some concluding paragraphs of his September article, F. Ramière refers with earnestness to the Count de Chambord, and to the course pursued towards him by French "Liberal Catholics." We cannot at all concur with what is contained in those paragraphs ; and we have thought it far more satisfactory to omit them, than to enter here on a controversy, which has no more than a very indirect bearing, if indeed it have any bearing at all, on the great question treated in the article.

But we have detained our readers too long from F. Ramière's admirable exposition and reasoning.]

F. Newman has lately reminded us that, in order justly to appreciate a doctrine, we must place ourselves at its defenders' point of view. Let us apply this rule to our controversy with Catholic Liberalism. We have heard it declare, through the mouth of its most eloquent champion, that it gives up the thought of defending itself on doctrinal grounds. "I put forth no theory, and above all no theology ; I do not reply by dogmatic arguments to the dogmatizers who condemn me and whom I repudiate. . . . I appeal to facts, and deduce from them the purely practical doctrines which I propose to you." We need not dispute this allegation ; let us suppose true what is certainly false, viz., that there can be a doctrine without a theory, and consequences without premisses. Let us consider Catholic Liberalism such as it professes itself, as a plan of conduct adapting better than any other the eternal interests of the truth to the conditions and requirements of modern society ; and let us ask ourselves whether

the system in question compensates by its practical utility for its complete absence of doctrinal basis.

There are four signs which determine the merit of a plan of conduct : the grandeur of the aim which it has in view ; the nobleness of the principle whence it springs ; the efficacy of the means which it employs, and the worth of the results which it obtains. If its aim cannot be realized, if the principle proclaimed is indefensible, if the means employed are in direct opposition to the intentions of those who make use of them,—in fine, if the results obtained are the very reverse of the promised and expected advantages—then the entire plan must be regarded as a complete failure.

Such is the precise estimate of Catholic Liberalism, considered under its most favourable aspect.

What is the aim which it proposes to itself? The reconciliation of the Christian dogma, viz. the social sovereignty of Jesus Christ, with liberal error, viz. the denial of this sovereignty : a manifest contradiction. What is the general principle which actuates the tactics of the Catholic Liberals? It is to make terms with an enemy, whom one despairs of conquering : a principle which places the new defenders of the Church in opposition to all their predecessors. What are the means adopted by Catholic Liberalism to attain its aim? Means reprobated by the Church, and consequently opposed to the belief and intentions of the Catholics who use them. What are the results of the system? The most serious injury has been inflicted on that very cause, of which this system was to have procured the triumph.

In three words : Catholic Liberalism is chimerical in its aim, anti-Catholic in its procedure, disastrous in its results.

These are very serious accusations : when we adduce them, we are fully conscious of the responsibility which we incur. Let our readers note well the proofs which we are about to give, and then say whether we have gone beyond the strict limits of truth and justice.

I.

But before undertaking this last part of our proof, we wish so plainly to express our meaning as to render all mistake impossible. Nothing in fact is more to be feared than such mistakes in the present controversy, in which our adversaries are men as devoted to truth as ourselves, and who fight against it only because they see things under a false light.

Let this then be well understood : under the name of Catholic Liberalism we by no means intend to condemn the attitude, as legitimate as it is loyal, assumed in the presence of the modern liberties by many Catholics, who inhabit countries where those liberties are the only possible safeguard of the rights of truth. Without in any way condemning the past actions of the Church, without pledging her future, without denying any of the rights of the Man-God, these Catholics accept, such as it is, the constitution of the society in whose bosom they live ; they endeavour to utilize its advantages and diminish its inconveniences ; and, while firmly resolved to fulfil conscientiously the duties which it imposes on them, they boldly claim on their side the rights which it confers. It is thus that our

brethren of England and America act; and what is there in their conduct which is not perfectly praiseworthy? Who can blame them for preferring the *régime* of honest liberty under which they live, to that hypocritical and bastard *régime* which is imposed on us by European Liberalism? a *régime* which, whilst refusing us the theoretical acknowledgment of the rights of the truth, preserves nevertheless those fetters, by which the powers of the ancient *régime* practically and abusively made truth purchase its own recognition? No, a thousand times no. To wish for the liberty of the Church does not mean that one is a *Liberal*; on the contrary, it is because we do not wish to sacrifice any portion of this liberty, that we detest Liberalism its most deadly enemy.

Neither is it to be a *Liberal* to desire true social liberties; and we think we have in former articles sufficiently proved that these liberties,* be they individual, domestic, communal, or provincial, are incompatible with Liberalism.

A person therefore is not necessarily a *Liberal*, because he seeks in the aspirations of modern societies whatever they contain that is generous, and shows that these societies will find the satisfaction of their noble instincts only in their reconciliation with the Church. Like all errors, Liberalism contains a part of truth, which it disfigures, and by whose assistance it seduces a great number of sincere minds. There are then two ways of meeting it and destroying its prestige: viz. either by displaying that portion of truth which it contains, and proving its identity with Catholic doctrine; or by attacking what is contrary to Catholic doctrine, and proving its absurdity. By the first of these two methods sincere minds are attracted, and by the second sophists are confounded. They are therefore both good and complement one another. Exaggeration alone is dangerous, and that in two senses; for if there is danger in urging conciliation so far as to palliate error, there is scarcely less danger in clothing the refutation of error with forms which render the truth odious. Those whose temperament inclines to this excess will be disposed to accuse of weakness those controversialists who adopt less repulsive measures. But it is sufficient to consider the examples of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, to convince one's self that it is not impossible to ally conciliatory modes of expression with an unshaken firmness of doctrine.

* In the "*Mouvement communal et municipal du Moyen Age*," M. Edouard Demolins proves by striking and undeniable facts that the origin, development, and fall of the public liberties in France corresponded to the increase and decline of the social influence of the Catholic Church. We are not aware of any more peremptory historical refutation of Liberalism. Again, M. Le Play, a judge whose impartiality and knowledge none will contest, has written to the author these remarkable words: "In recalling us to the history of the past and respect for our ancestors, you inspire us with strength to cure the evils of the present day and to prepare our children for a better future. . . . The principal feature of our history has now been made clear: the middle age notwithstanding its deficiencies and defects, had communicated to our race qualities, which are daily being destroyed under the influence of the three false dogmata of the Revolution. These errors are the only novelties, which an analysis of the two '*Declaration of rights*' reveals in the pretended '*principles of 1789*.'"

Finally, it would be unjust to accuse of Liberalism those who hope that the Church will come out triumphant from the trial to which modern societies subject her, in the same way as she triumphed over the equally perilous crises through which she passed, both in pagan times and during certain periods of the middle ages. This is our hope, and we share it with many illustrious persons who are anything rather than Liberals. We believe that in every event which He ordains or permits, God has in view only the triumph of His Church; and that this triumph is to have for its scene, not heaven alone, but earth likewise. During past centuries the Church has passed through two states, and in its dealings with civil society has been subjected to two *régimes*: the *régime* of persecution and that of union. Without putting these two *régimes* on an equality, we must admit that the Church was exposed to no less danger by the latter than by the former. Never during times of persecution was she in a worse state, than at the commencement of the eleventh century. This is merely a verification of the old saying, that the abuses of the best things are the worst abuses.

The Church has triumphed over all her dangers; she has emerged victorious both from the violence of persecution, and the fetters of protection changed into tyranny. We believe that she will likewise prove victorious over the *régime* of separation. But whence do we expect this triumph to come? Not from the virtue inherent to liberty. We are, on the contrary, persuaded,—and it is in this that we differ from the Liberals,—that, in consequence of the natural corruption of mankind, the liberty of error is in itself deadly—more deadly, perhaps, than violent persecution. But we hope that God will make use of the disasters caused by this fatal liberty, as He made use of the violence of persecution, to bring back to Jesus Christ, their only Saviour, the nations over whom He promised that He should reign.*

What then, in a few words, is the error which we oppose under the name of Catholic Liberalism? It is that which, without daring to uphold the necessity and absolute excellence of the separation of the two societies (for this constitutes *pure* Liberalism), still does not conceal its preference for this course; which, while admitting that [the doctrine of its predilection] is but a hypothesis,—nevertheless places it above the thesis itself; and declares that it alone is adapted to the wants of adult humanity, whilst the *régime* of the union of the two powers can only have been useful during the infancy of nations, and even then possessed inconveniences surpassing its utility. If they merely desired for the democratic societies of future ages a mode of alliance with the spiritual society different from that adopted by

* In a magnificent Brief addressed to the Bishops of Sicily, the same hopes are expressed, founded on the same motives. The Holy Father thanks the Sicilian prelates for the marks of their attachment, and adds: "These proofs, whilst showing that God is with us, should raise our courage and inspire us with hopes of assistance which cannot fail to come, and of a brilliant and certain victory. Has not the Church ever triumphed in a manner so much the more striking, as she has been attacked with more violence and been exposed to greater dangers?"

the old monarchies of the *ancien régime*, we should not have a word to say. One of the terms being changed, the relation of the two would also naturally be modified. But to recognize the *independence* of these societies in their relation with Jesus Christ and His Church—this is what Catholics cannot do without disowning the essential rights of that divine King; it is this implicit if not express denial, which constitutes the error and danger of Catholic Liberalism.

But neither this error nor this danger is perceived by the majority of those who have allowed themselves to be seduced by this specious system; and for this reason we can, without any oratorical artifice, protest that we in no way include them in the grave accusations which we are about to bring against their doctrine. We are, on the contrary, happy to join our testimony to that of a journalist who, although he has but lately entered the arena, has at once assumed a prominent position. Before commencing his vigorous attack on Catholic Liberalism, F. At thus speaks of the adversaries whom he is about to combat:—"It would appear as if all the talent of our epoch has rallied round this theory. In the Institute, at the bar, in the parliament, in the press, and in all branches of science and literature; in the ranks of the secular clergy, in religious orders, and even in the Episcopate; men are to be found siding with the cause which we are combating. Not only do these men exhibit great elevation of thought and beauty of language, but they have moreover rendered the Church services which that grateful Mother will never forget, and which it is our duty loudly to proclaim. They have trained a portion of contemporary youth in religion; they have removed many prejudices, and reconciled to Jesus Christ a great number of antagonisms. . . . To name Lacordaire and Montalembert is to name two Apostles, whose ardent eloquence has left a trace on our century, and whose immortal works sustain the happy influence which they exercised during their lives." *

These praises are not in the least exaggerated; we hesitate still less to endorse them because, far from weakening the accusation which we are about to bring against Catholic Liberalism, they do but aggravate the four charges on which we base the condemnation of this error. We should not be able to form a true idea of the evil that it does us, if we did not weigh well the merit of the men whom it has seduced. We shall, on the contrary, justly appreciate it if we prove that the effect of its fascination over these enlightened minds and upright hearts is, firstly, to make them, notwithstanding their abilities, the victims of a real trickery; secondly, notwithstanding their courage, to force on them a cowardly capitulation; thirdly, to give to their [Catholic] loyalty the whole appearance of revolt; fourthly and lastly, to render their services [to the Church] as fatal as treason itself would be. Thus, whilst heartily acknowledging the talents, loyalty, courage, and devotedness of the Liberal Catholics, we sum up in these four words the balance of the bankruptcy of Catholic Liberalism: trickery, cowardice, revolt, treason.

* "Le Vrai et le Faux en matière d'Autorité et de Liberté, d'après la Doctrine du Syllabus." By Rev. F. At, priest of the Sacred Heart, vol. ii. p. 164.

II.

CATHOLIC LIBERALISM MAKES ITS ABLEST DISCIPLES THE VICTIMS OF
A REAL TRICKERY.

We do not know any term more suitable, to characterize the conduct of a man who, led away by excessive credulity, allows himself to be made a tool of by his enemy, believes in the grossest lies, and favours at his own expense the success of a perfidious stratagem. Now it is precisely in this manner that those excellent Catholics act, who allow themselves to be fascinated by the Liberal illusion.

1st. They wish, they tell us, to secure the liberty of the Church. But whence do they expect her liberty to come? From her bitterest enemy. We are not speaking of American Liberalism. The Catholics whose illusion we are now seeking to dispel, inhabit Europe itself; and it is consequently to the advocates of European Liberalism that they appear disposed to ally themselves. Fancying that these Liberals are separated from the Catholic Church solely because they suspect her of not approving those liberties which are so dear to themselves, these Catholics persuade themselves that peace would be concluded the moment the Church should proclaim those liberties.* But this hope is as vain, as the supposition on which it is founded is gratuitous. For we are well acquainted with this Liberalism whose goodwill it is expected to conciliate; its language and actions have shown us its real tendencies; and we must purposely blind ourselves, if we place the least reliance on the lying promises which it occasionally adds to its but too sincere threats. From its birth it has never ceased to persecute the Church; and in every country in Europe where it has acquired power, it has used that power to oppress the truth. It was only when it ceased to fear her, that it broke the bonds which it had imposed; and it is still ready at any moment again to impose them, as soon as there is the slightest chance of her recovering her empire. We recently cast a *coup d'œil* over the various countries which have submitted to the yoke of Liberalism, and thus convinced ourselves that of all the liberties of which it is the enemy that of the Church is honoured with its bitterest hatred.

How is it then that our Liberal Catholics can respond to the persistency of this hatred by the persistency of their confidence? This conduct is all the more inexplicable, inasmuch as they long since recognized its folly. As long ago as the 3rd February, 1834, Lacordaire wrote to Montalembert: "You allow that the Liberals of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, in short, the whole world (or at least the European world) are the greatest enemies of liberty, and you go so far as to call them infamous; I do not go so far as that. You allow that it is impossible for you to enter into an alliance

* "At length, happily, peace can be restored. We proclaim the liberties, which are so dear to those who accuse us of not approving them; we invoke them for ourselves as for others." These words, written by an illustrious prelate before the liberal controversy had seriously commenced, were quoted with approval by M. de Montalembert in his speech at the Congress of Malines in 1863. ("L'Eglise libre dans l'Etat libre." Douniol, p. 70.)

with them ; this is the overturning of all the ideas of the "Avenir," and of the still-existing opinions of Abbé de La Mennais. "A fortiori" you allow that it is impossible for the Pope and the Church to enter into alliance with them ; and this is exactly what the Pope and the Church feel."

In 1834, then, the leaders of the Catholic Liberal school agreed among themselves that they had taken a wrong road ; that the fundamental conception of the "Avenir," the first organ of that school, was radically erroneous ; that European Liberalism was the greatest enemy of the Church and of liberty, and that an alliance with it was impracticable and senseless. But then, what can we say when thirty years later we find these same men putting forth all their eloquence, in defence of a system which they had declared dangerous, and of an alliance which they had recognized as impracticable ? Had European Liberalism changed its nature during the interval ? Not at all ; it had, on the contrary, become more oppressive : then how can we see anything but trickery, in the complaisance shown to it by those who seemed so convinced of its perfidy.

2nd. Could this complaisance be explained by the truth and intrinsic beauty of that doctrine, which its defenders might be thought accidentally to misapply ? Doubtless, if Liberalism were true and just in itself, we should have but all the more merit in defending it, in spite of the ill-conduct of its representatives. But this explanation is not admissible. We showed this at the commencement of this controversy : the Liberal doctrine is not only erroneous in some of its applications, it is false in itself, because falsehood constitutes its basis. It is based on the confusion of two contradictory notions : independence towards God and liberty towards man. One of these two notions destroys the other : because men cannot be free in their mutual dealings, unless their liberty is respected by their equals ; and this respect cannot exist in a society, where the authority of God is delivered up to contumely. Is it not a complete misconception of human nature to suppose that it can ever remain towards the rights of God in an attitude of friendly neutrality ? Can an inferior cease to recognize the authority of his superior, without becoming hostile to him ? It is conceivable perhaps that this neutrality is possible, in a society where the royalty of Jesus Christ and the spiritual supremacy of the Church have never been recognized. But in those societies which have for long been subject to that glorious yoke, and have criminally cast it off ; in those which, owing all to Jesus Christ and to the Church even their very existence, have responded to twelve centuries of benefits by revolt ;—to count upon any equitableness save that of submission is to make a moral impossibility the object of our hopes. Pure Liberalism is then a pure lie ; Catholic Liberalism, which persists in believing the truth of this lie, is a standing trickery.

3rd. A trickery all the more blamable, in so much as it favours the success of a perfidious stratagem. The Liberal sect is not, in fact, a school of speculative philosophy ; it is a party, both religious and political, which only puts forward its lying theory to attain a purely practical object. This object, which far-seeing thinkers had long foretold, has revealed itself by facts so clearly that doubt is rendered impossible. Its purpose

has been to destroy all divine authority, first in the political and then in the religious order. In order to conceal the infernal object of this design, the grand and specious name of liberty has been put forward. There is no expression in human language which has a greater number of significations, and which, accordingly, better favours equivocation. There is not one which more powerfully excites the most noble aspirations of the human heart, and which also more flatters its most depraved instincts. It has always been the tactic of error, to employ against the truth formulæ which, under a specious appearance, concealed the denial of a revealed dogma. The distinguishing feature of the new heresy is that, to attack the most fundamental of all dogmata, the authority of God,—it employs the most specious of all formulæ, the liberty of man.

And what do the Catholic Liberals do in presence of such a dangerous attack? They sympathise with the principles of the enemy; they unite with him in proclaiming liberty, without distinguishing false from true liberty; they systematically keep silence on the subject of that dogma of divine authority, which error tries to obscure. What better could they do to favour the success of the stratagem? And since we cannot suspect them of acting thus with a perverse intention, how else can we qualify their conduct than in saying that they are victims to trickery?

III.

CONSIDERED IN ITS PRINCIPLE, CATHOLIC LIBERALISM IS A COWARDICE WHICH PARALYZES THE COURAGE OF THE MOST VALIANT DEFENDERS OF THE CHURCH.

Nothing can be more contrary to appearances than this assertion, and yet nothing can be more in accordance with fact. On a superficial examination, we might believe that Catholic Liberalism has inspired its adepts with a wonderful courage. At the time when the sons of Voltaire believed their triumph certain in consequence of the Revolution of 1830, was it not this school which proudly raised the Catholic standard, and undertook, without any human chance of success, that memorable campaign, which restored to religion its place first in public opinion and partially also in public institutions? Does not the very name of Montalembert recall those celebrated struggles, in which the son of the Crusades fought alone, or almost alone, against the incurable prejudices and the declared hostility of the Government and the Chambers? God forbid we should say anything which might tend to tarnish the glory of those struggles, or diminish the gratitude due to those who maintained them so valiantly. Far from implying this injustice and ingratitude, our assertion expressly excludes it; for we leave to the Liberal Catholics the credit of valour, and reserve to Catholic Liberalism the discredit of cowardice. Our whole argument rests on this antithesis; and the reader must therefore pardon us if we keep it constantly in view. What he has a right to require is, that we should furnish a strict proof: an easy matter in the present case.

The truth can be betrayed in two ways: by exaggeration, which, ren-

dering it hateful, deprives it of its power of attraction; and by compromises, which only render it attractive through mutilating it. We have already had occasion to commemorate and condemn the former of these tendencies; a tendency, with which the Liberals love to credit all their adversaries, but which in reality can only be the accidental error of a few. No, it is not all anti-Liberal Catholics, who take pleasure in rendering more difficult the reconciliation of modern society with the Church, by exaggerating either the errors of the former or the teaching of the latter, and by putting forward exclusively the points of disagreement. If, remembering the words and the example of our Saviour, we do not unduly fear for His doctrine that unpopularity, which He was the first to experience,—still we are far from being gratified by it; on the contrary, we seek with our whole heart the re-establishment of that social reign of Jesus Christ, which can only result from the free consent of nations. We therefore repel, as the effect of a mischievous temerity, those exaggerations, which would carry the defence and application of principles beyond what is done by the Church herself.

But if there is temerity in wounding public opinion thus gratuitously, how shall we qualify the contrary tendency? that, viz., which, in order to keep well with public opinion, dissimulates principles, refuses to confess the rights of Jesus Christ, and openly connives at the contemners of those divine rights? Does not this tendency, which is no other than Catholic Liberalism, merit the title of cowardice? Scripture praises the courage of the holy old man who, when informed that he could save his life by letting it be imagined that he had violated the law of Moses, preferred death to giving scandal by his silence. Had he acted otherwise would he not have been guilty of real cowardice? And what does Catholic Liberalism do? It says to its followers: amongst the dogmata of your faith there is one which modern societies are bent on suppressing—the social royalty of the Man-God. If you persist in confessing this dogma, you render yourselves incapable of rising to high offices and obtaining entrance into learned bodies; you will have to renounce the favour of public opinion, and the substantial advantages which accompany the flattering distinctions of which it is the dispenser. Dissimulate then; without openly denying the hated dogma, show by your silence that you do not attach great importance to it; fraternize with those who deny it; and preserve all your antipathy for those who support it too openly. You will still be Catholics, since you will not deny any of the truths taught by the Church; and you will, moreover, partake of all the advantages which Liberalism promises to its followers.

Speaking plainly, is not this the exact expression of the position which Catholic Liberalism assigns to its disciples? And can all the illusions which the Catholic Liberals make an excuse for such a situation, prevent it being a capitulation, and consequently a cowardice?

Let no one, then, seek to justify this capitulation by reminding us of the acts of heroism by which several of them have immortalized their names. Such an argument is a pure sophism, which common sense can readily answer. Catholic Liberals, *although* Liberals, have done heroic actions,

and not *because* they are Liberals. They have defended admirably well those rights of Jesus Christ which are least contested by modern society ; but how much better would it not have been had they, with the prudence which ever accompanies true courage, upheld the truth in its integrity, and avoided sacrificing one part of its domain in order the better to protect the other ! This is the present conduct now adopted by those other sons of the Crusades, who are not less eloquent than their illustrious predecessors, and who have over them the inappreciable advantage of defending Jesus Christ in His entire prerogatives. Having entered the arena after the Syllabus had rendered it impossible for Catholics to mistake the sense of the Church, they accepted her teaching with generous submission, though in doing so they entailed on themselves certain unpopularity. And now, whilst seeking above all the Kingdom of God and His justice, they have reacquired those very advantages, which they seemed to have hopelessly sacrificed. They are the object of popularity ; but not of that unhealthy popularity, which despises, even whilst it applauds, the flatterers of public opinion. That popularity, which crowns the defenders of integral truth, results from the esteem, not only of their daily increasing adherents, but also of their adversaries, who are compelled to admire their courage and testify their sincerity. To them principally, after Pius IX., will redound the glory of having destroyed Catholic Liberalism. Whilst the immortal author of the Syllabus pointed out with sovereign authority the errors of that system, these courageous Christians, by loudly professing the contrary doctrine in public assemblies, were destroying the charm which had for long fascinated the best-intentioned minds.

IV.

CATHOLIC LIBERALISM GIVES TO THE [CATHOLIC] FIDELITY OF ITS
ADHERENTS ALL THE APPEARANCE OF REBELLION.

Revolt is the act of a subject who, not content with himself violating the orders of his superiors, seeks to draw others to join him in his disobedience, and, consequently, to overthrow the authority which he rejects.

It is precisely in this manner that Catholic Liberalism acts, with regard to the double authority with which Jesus Christ has endowed His Church : the authority of government, and the authority of teaching.

1st. Catholic Liberalism rebels against the authority of government and guidance (*regendi ac gubernandi*), of which the Sovereign Pontiff has received the plenitude. Jesus Christ did not merely say to His Apostles "Go and teach" ; but He also said to S. Peter "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." Either these words have no meaning, or they signify that in all which regards the salvation of souls and the good of the Church, the faithful should follow the guidance of S. Peter's successors. Accordingly the Catholic Church has always believed what the Council of Florence expressly defined ; viz., that to S. Peter and his successors has been confided the *full power* of feeding, governing, and *guiding* the flock of Jesus Christ.

The Council of the Vatican has renewed this Definition under a more explicit form, in the third chapter of the "*Pastor Æternus*."*

Now it is the custom of Catholic Liberalism not to take into account this power. If it does not openly deny the said power, it ignores it. But is it not a *real* denial to say, that it is authorized to maintain its doctrine as long as that doctrine has not been condemned by an express definition, that is, by the supreme exercise of the *teaching* power? If M. de Montalembert had not forgotten the existence of the guiding power, would he have deemed himself sufficiently justified by merely telling us that he put forward no theory—that he satisfied himself with examining facts and drawing from them practical application? "I cannot repeat too often that I am not uttering theology, but politics, and, above all, history. When I speak of the Church, it will not be as an interpreter of her laws or her doctrines, but as a simple Christian, a politician, ruled by the sense of what is possible and what is not; and even then I do not profess an absolute theory, but a practical doctrine drawn from the teaching of events; I do not pretend to change a question of conduct into one of orthodoxy. In one word, I do not put myself forward as a doctor, but a soldier; a soldier of the vanguard, obliged to reconnoitre the ground where the fight has to take place."†

What idea is skilfully concealed under these images? It is that the relations of the Church with temporal societies can be judged by two tribunals, independent of each other: the tribunal of theology, whereon the Pope is the supreme judge; and the tribunal of politics and history, whereon all those sit who consider themselves fitted by their course of studies and enlightenment. The former of these tribunals extends its jurisdiction to theory only; the latter alone has a right of directing the practice. The Pope judges of what is true; the simple Christian of what is possible,—a thing which the Pope is evidently not in a position to appreciate. Let the Pope say what he will, the politician, by the fact that he is not the interpreter of the rights and doctrines of the Church, has the right of repudiating them. To consult the doctrine of the Church, is the business of the doctor; but the soldier, and especially the soldier in the vanguard, who is obliged to reconnoitre the ground chosen for the fight, must consult only his own experience, and is not to trouble himself about the instructions given by the commander-in-chief.

In this Liberalism remains faithful to its origin. It does but repeat, with slight variation, the words of the founder of the school: "If my theses

* The following is the text of the Council of the Vatican, which renews and confirms the decree of Florence:—"Quapropter apertis innixi sacrarum litterarum testimoniis . . . innovamus œcumenici concilii Florentini Definitionem, quâ credendum ab omnibus Christifidelibus est. . . . Pontificem Romanum successorem esse Beati Petri principis Apostolorum, et verum Christi vicarium, totiusque Ecclesie caput, et omnium Christianorum Patrem ac doctorem existere, et ipsi in Beato Petro pascendi, regendi ac gubernandi universalem Ecclesiam a Domino nostro Jesu Christo plenam potestatem traditam esse."

† Second discourse of Malines: "*L'Eglise libre dans l'Etat libre*," p. 93.

are repulsed, I see no means of defending religion."* Yet Lamennais did not limit the domain of spiritual authority, quite as narrowly as M. de Montalembert. He admitted that, as regards the relations of Church and State, the Pope is sovereign judge, even as regards practice. "My doctrines remain unchanged," he wrote, one year after the publication of the Encyclical "*Mirari vos*"; "it only remains more and more clearly established, that the Pope fears and entirely disavows my political views. *In their relation to the government of the Church*, he is judge and I am not; it is for him to command, for me to obey; it is my duty, and, with God's grace, I shall not fail in it. But outside the Church,—in the purely temporal order,—I acknowledge no authority, which has a right to force an opinion on me and dictate a line of action."† Who that reads these lines can fail to be startled and alarmed at the incredible power of illusion, and the danger to which a Catholic is exposed who allows himself to limit the rights of the Church? He who thus declared himself resolved never to be wanting in obedience to the Pope, had in his drawer ready for the press, at that very time, the book which was to consummate his apostacy!

But, in theory at least, he was far more orthodox than those who arrogate to themselves a complete independence with regard to the governing authority of the Church, or who even dictate to her her proper line of conduct on all that concerns the practical determination of her relations with civil society. Now it requires but a very moderate discernment to discover this pretension, under the more or less respectful formulæ of which the Catholic Liberals make use. It is impossible to interpret otherwise certain passages of the manifesto published in the "*Correspondant*," on the eve of the Council, under the signature of the Editor.‡

After severely blaming "the rash speculations" of those who dare impute to the Council the intention of condemning Liberalism, after promising to maintain the greatest reserve, the author of this manifesto goes so far as to ask the Bishops of all the countries in the world, "pilgrims of all lands, what is *the greatest need* of their churches"? and he himself suggests the reply "*which they should make, with their hands on their heart*": "all will be obliged to say that the greatest need of their churches is liberty; but that they have no other means of acquiring that holy liberty, except that of securing it by the common liberty of their fellow-citizens."

It would be difficult to dictate more clearly to the Council the solution which it was to give to the most delicate of all the questions submitted to its examination. But lest even then the Council had not sufficiently understood the lesson, language more energetic still was employed. "In order that this defence of truth by liberty may be maintained by us with honour and some hope of success, there is an *indispensable* condition, of

* Lamennais: Letter to the Abbé Carron, quoted by M. Foisset, "*Life of F. Lacordaire*," ch. iii.

† Letter of M^{me}. la Marquise de Senfft, 1st August, 1873: "*Vie de Père Lacordaire*," ch. vi.

‡ "*Correspondant*," 10th October, 1869.

which we now venture to remind our spiritual fathers with humility yet with firmness." And this indispensable condition, of which the pastors of the Church are reminded with so much humility, is the renunciation of the intention to condemn Liberalism. In real truth, could the Catholic Liberals have spoken with more assurance, had Jesus Christ intrusted to them the government of His Church, and promised them the assistance which He guaranteed to S. Peter and his successors? In order that it could be permissible to express thus boldly an idea which they know is opposed to that of the Pope and the majority of the Episcopate, they must have admitted as a thing at least possible, that, in a question concerning the most vital interests of His Church, Jesus Christ, forgetful of His promise, has concealed the truth from the Ecclesia Docens, to reveal it to a few men possessed of no mission whatever. Is this supposition admissible?

On this subject let us listen to the voice of one who cannot be suspected by the Liberals,—that of Lacordaire. "If in important cases the Church misguides the flock, who shall guide it? For me, if I thought that on any point where she exacts my submission the Church could lead me down an abyss, my faith would be at an end. If, on the contrary, we recognize the Church as perpetually inspired by God, we submit our judgment to hers in so far as she requires, and immediately a great calm comes over us."*

But the Catholic Liberal will perhaps not be moved by these considerations; and, under the pretext that there is here question of matters of conduct, he will persist in his opinion that he knows more about it than the Pope does. Let him hearken to the striking words issuing from the same source:

"Behold yourself alone with your own conscience pondering in solitude on these vital questions, and daring to own to yourself that, if the Church thinks as the Pope, *you* do not think as the Church! The beneficent yoke of authority does not exist for you. You reason instead of adoring. You refuse to God the sacrifice of Isaac. You are analogously in a similar state to that of all heretics who, after the condemnation of their errors, cannot persuade themselves to sacrifice their own opinions."

2nd. But does Liberalism respect the *doctrinal* authority of the Church more than her *guiding* power? Let us not imagine so. It is true, that to acquire the right of not listening to this authority, it boldly says that she has not spoken; but when the whole universe re-echoes with the sound of her voice, this obstinate deafness can only be regarded as a more polite form of disobedience. For the Ecclesia Docens has a thousand times expressed her judgment concerning the errors of Liberalism. She uttered it on the first appearance of these errors, she has repeated it on every occasion, and she has never varied. Without pronouncing a formal anathema, she could not condemn more energetically than she has done the doctrines and institutions which Liberalism openly patronizes, nor define with more precision the truth which it refuses to profess.

We will not go so far back as the time of the Apostles, from whom we

* Lacordaire: Letter to Montalembert, 3rd February, 1834.

have before quoted several decisive passages ; but will merely speak of those official Acts by which the Church condemns error and proclaims truth. One of the most solemn of these acts is the Bull "Unam Sanctam" of Boniface VIII. In it we cannot fail to recognize the character of a dogmatic judgment, by which the Pope inflicts on a doctrine the severest of all epithets, that of heresy ; "Quod falsum et hæreticum judicamus" : whilst he defines the opposite doctrine as necessary for salvation : "Definimus et pronuntiamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis." * But what is the condemned doctrine ? It is that which we have just stigmatized, as the common basis of Liberalism and Cæsarism : viz., the complete independence of the civil power with regard to the spiritual. In the days of Boniface VIII. this power was in the hands of an absolute king ; now it is wielded by parliaments : but this difference does not in any way bear on the present question, and the Pope does not make the least allusion to it. He does not speak of him who *possesses* the power, but of the power itself ; which he designates by the title of "the sword." The Holy Father fully recognizes that there are two swords and two powers, one temporal, the other spiritual ; and that this latter power is in the hands of the Church : but he teaches that these two powers, coming both from God, cannot be mutually independent. "One of these swords," he says, "must be subordinate to the other, and the temporal authority must submit to the spiritual power." The Pope bases this subordination, firstly, on the essential order of the world, which declares that the inferior things be led to their end by the superior. "Now, the spiritual power surpasses in nobility and dignity every earthly power, and of this we should be as sure as we are that spiritual things are above temporal ones." It is equally indubitable that, when establishing His Church, Jesus Christ charged the supreme pastors to instruct and judge all the faithful, and that He made no exception in favour of those who are invested with power. "Therefore, if terrestrial power deviate, it will be judged by the spiritual power." To maintain the contrary would be to fall into the error of the Manichæans, who believed in two principles ; a belief "which we pronounce false and heretical." For this reason, concludes the Pope, "we affirm, define, and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation that "every human creature should be subject to the Roman Pontiff." †

* [We cannot precisely follow F. Ramière in his view of the "Unam Sanctam" ; but the difference between him and ourselves in no way affects the force of his argument. ED. D. R.]

† "Petro subesse Romano Pontifici omnem humanam creaturam declaramus, dicimus, definimus et pronuntiamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis." In his work on "True and False Infallibility," Mgr. Fessler justly remarks that these last lines of the Bull "Unam Sanctam" alone contain a definition of faith properly so called. But it is impossible for us to admit what the Bishop adds ; viz. that the subordination of the temporal power to the spiritual in everything that is included in the domain of the latter is not indubitably established by this Definition. In the first place, the words themselves, taken literally, sufficiently express this subordination, since they are general and except nothing that belongs to humanity : "Omnem humanam creaturam." Secondly, the preamble of the Constitu-

This definition evidently refers to a democratic state quite as much as to an absolute monarchy. The Catholic Liberals are therefore obliged to admit it if they wish to remain Catholics; but if they do admit it, let them cease to call themselves Liberals, since Liberalism consists precisely in the denial of this doctrine.

Condemned in its principle, together with the monarchical Cæsarism of Philippe le Bel, Liberalism no sooner appeared under its present form at the end of the last century, than it was condemned by Pius VI. as tending directly to the annihilation of the Catholic religion.

"It is with this object," says the Pontiff, "that that absolute liberty has been claimed as a right of man in society, which not only bestows on him the right of not being interfered with concerning his religious opinions, but which likewise permits him to think, say, write, and even print with impunity, concerning religion, all that the most unbridled imagination can suggest: a monstrous right which, however, appears to the Assembly to result from the equality and liberty necessary to all men. But what can be more ridiculous than to claim for men an equality and liberty, which make no account of the prerogatives of reason by which, nevertheless, man raises himself above the lower animals? After creating man, and placing him in a garden of delights, did not God threaten him with death if he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and did He not, by this first prohibition, place a limit to his liberty? Where then is that liberty to think and act which the National Assembly ascribes to the social man as an inalienable right of his nature? Is not this chimerical right opposed to the rights of the supreme Creator?"

Pius VI. concludes by recalling to mind the condemnation of similar errors, as held by the Waldenses, Wycklyfites, and Lutherans.*

In the previous year (the 10th July, 1790), in a Brief addressed to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the same Pontiff had very plainly formulated the judgment of the Church on the great principles of 1789. "The projects of these new innovators," says the Brief, "have no other aim, than to abolish Catholicity, confirm unbelievers in their incredulity, and to destroy the faith of believers. This is their object in proclaiming a liberty which under a specious name only offers license and instability."

No sooner did Pius VII. ascend the pontifical throne than he hastened to condemn, in his Encyclical, "*Diu satis videmur*," of the 13th May, 1800, the fatal liberties which his predecessor had condemned at their rise; and, as if enlightened by a prophetic light, he declared that as long as the unbridled license of thought, speech, writing, and reading were not suppressed, so long would material force be powerless to repress the disorders of the Revolution. "The roots of the evil, not being eradicated, will spread abroad, become vigorous, and seize on the entire world."

Similar condemnations and warnings were again promulgated by

tion, though not defining any doctrine, fixes the sense and the aim of the Definition. It is against those who withdraw a human creation, that is, the civil power, from the jurisdiction of the Church, that the Pontiff defines, as necessary to salvation, the subordination of all human creation to this jurisdiction.

* The Brief "*Quod aliquantum*," addressed to Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, member of the National Assembly, 10th March, 1791.

Leo XII. and Pius VIII., the successors of Pius VII., in the Encyclicals which they addressed to the Catholic world on their elevation to the chair of St. Peter.*

But of all the condemnations issued by the Church against the cherished liberties of Catholic Liberalism, the most solemn and the most express is that which Liberalism itself provoked by its first great manifestation. We have already said that until 1830, this error had appeared but vaguely and without system in the works of a few isolated writers; but at that time the school was formed under the direction of a celebrated master, and obtained a very influential organ. Daily, in the pages of the "*Avenir*," writers of talent developed, with all the attractions of their style and the ardour of their youth, the theories of La Mennais concerning the relations of the Church with the State. Opposed in France by the Catholics who remained faithful to the ancient traditions, the new controversialists appealed to Rome, and Rome answered by the Encyclical "*Mirari vos*." We will not quote this document as it is sufficiently well known. We all know with what severity the Pope stigmatizes "the absurd and erroneous opinion, or rather delirium, that liberty of conscience must be claimed for every man: a contagious error, the road to which has been paved by that absolute and unlimited liberty of opinion which, to the detriment of the Church and the State, is spreading on every side, thanks to the shameless audacity of certain men who fear not to represent it as in a manner advantageous to religion. 'But,' exclaimed St. Augustine, 'what more fatal death can strike the soul than the liberty of error?'"

With regard to the liberty of the press, Gregory XVI. styled it a *detestable liberty worthy of execration*; and he deplores "the insulting audacity of those who dared to affirm, that this mass of errors is abundantly compensated for by such or such a book, published in the midst of this deluge of iniquity, in defence of religion and truth. Now," continues the Pope, "it is certainly unlawful and contrary to all notions of justice premeditatedly to work a certain and greater evil with the hope of good resulting from it. What man in his senses would say that poisons should be freely circulated, publicly sold and carried about, nay, even drunk, because there exists a remedy, by using which, persons sometimes succeed in escaping death?"

Thus we see that, when Pius IX. in the Encyclical "*Quantâ Curâ*" and in the Syllabus, again condemned the Liberal system, he only faithfully followed in the steps of his predecessors; and Liberalism cannot refuse to submit to this last decision, without repudiating the constant tradition of the Church. It should now recall to mind that maxim of St. Vincent of Lerins, which it quoted so irrelevantly at the time of the Council to prevent the definition of pontifical infallibility: "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est.*" How is it that it cannot

* These texts and other documents relative to the present question will be found in the "*Civiltà Cattolica*," series iv. vol. i. The Abbé Onclair has inserted the translation of these articles in the book entitled, "*De la Révolution et de la Restauration des vrais principes sociaux*," vol. iii. p. 227 and fol. (Brussels, Goemare).

see that it is itself crushed by this maxim? If the opposition of a single school during a limited time could reasonably prevent the infallibility from being declared a dogma of Faith, how can it be maintained that the condemnations, constantly renewed by the Sovereign Pontiffs with the consent of the whole Episcopate and all the Catholic schools, allow of any doubt that Liberalism is contrary to the Faith?

By these repeated Acts the Popes have certainly not purported to eulogize the abuses of the *ancien régime*,* nor proscribe the progress of modern society; but they have intended to say, and have very distinctly said, that in the *ancien régime* there was one very excellent thing, the agreement of the two powers; and that in modern society there is one detestable thing, social apostasy. When then, after such explicit declarations, Liberal Catholicism dares to say, as it said at Mechlin by the mouth of M. de Montalembert, that "in the ancient order of things the Catholics had nothing to regret, and that in the new they have nothing to fear," it not only opposes its judgment to that of the Church, but it employs the eloquence and credit of its defenders to prevent Catholic youth from submitting in this matter to the teaching of the Holy See. Are we not right in saying that a devotedness [to the Holy See], which appears under this form, possesses all the appearances of rebellion?

We should then have proved our second thesis, even had we not been able to adduce a single passage mentioning Catholic Liberalism in express terms. But who does not know that its persistence in ignoring less explicit pronouncements has obliged the Holy See to depart from the reserve which it had long held in regard to it? Seeing that this condescension only served to confirm the Liberal Catholics in their error, Pius IX. has seized every opportunity to dissipate their illusion, and deprive them of the vain pretexts of which they make use. It is true that the documents which contain his warnings are not solemn Bulls; but still they cannot truly be regarded as similar to the mere Letters of congratulation addressed by the Pope to Catholic writers who offer him the fruit of their labours. Many of these Briefs have, it is true, been written on such occasions; but instead of sending a simple blessing, the Holy Father gives a precise direction to Catholic writers; reproves Catholic Liberalism by name; blames its tendencies and shows forth its dangers. He designates it "as a dangerous doctrine which, though upheld by friends of religion, is more to be feared

* In the very Brief in which he condemns the dogmatic errors contained in the declaration of the "Rights of Man," Pius VI. protests energetically against the accusation of wishing to re-establish the abuses or even the political forms of the *ancien régime*. "We must, however, explain," he says, "that it is not our intention to attack the new civil laws to which the king may have given his consent, and which concern only the temporary government entrusted to him. . . . When recalling these maxims it is not our object to promote the re-establishment of the *ancien régime* of France. To suppose this would be to renew a calumny, which was invented merely to render religion odious." Notwithstanding the protestations of the Pope, the calumny has continued to spread until our own day. Liberalism, which is a lie, has no better weapons with which to defend itself against truth than calumny.

than impiety itself."* In fact, "those who maintain these doctrines which are called Catholic-Liberal . . . are more dangerous and deadly than declared enemies, because they second the efforts of these latter without being understood to do so; and because whilst standing, as it were, on the verge of condemned opinions, they give themselves an appearance of sound and spotless doctrine, which allures the unwise advocates of conciliation, and deceives good people who would firmly oppose a declared error. In this way they divide minds, destroy unity, and weaken the forces which should unite to oppose the enemy."† The Holy Father likewise congratulates the members of the federation of the circles of Belgium "on their aversion to Catholic Liberal principles." He acknowledges that "those who are imbued with these principles profess great love and respect for the Church, and appear to devote their talents and labours to her defence: nevertheless," he adds, "they set themselves to pervert her doctrine and her spirit; and each one of them, according to his various taste and temperament, either enrolls himself in the service of Cæsar, or else makes common cause with the defenders of a false liberty."‡ We could extend such quotations, but to what purpose? Is not the judgment of the Head of the Church clearly enough expressed in these last words? and must not every honest man say with the Bishop of Poitiers "that after reading the explicit and motived condemnation of religious Liberalism, it requires singular obstinacy to attempt reconciling this system with Catholic orthodoxy?"§

Accordingly one of the most esteemed Roman canonists, Dr. Avanzini, in his commentary on the Bull "*Apostolicæ sedis*," proposes a question concerning Catholic Liberals, which should give them matter for thought. Commenting upon the third article of this Bull, which declared all those excommunicated who "obstinately refuse the obedience due to the Sovereign Pontiff," he asks himself "whether this censure includes those Catholics called Liberals who, rejecting the laws and commands of the Roman Pontiff, publicly act as if they had thrown off his authority, although they join no other religious communion." "Yes," replies the Doctor, "I am of opinion that they are comprised in the censure, because they are really in rebellion against the authority of the Pope. To incur excommunication one is not obliged to adhere to a schismatical authority; it is sufficient obstinately to disobey legitimate authority."||

We have exaggerated nothing then, in qualifying with the name of revolt the persistence of the Liberal Catholics in following a plan of battle, condemned by those whom God has appointed to be our guides.

We have now to examine the system under a third aspect, and prove that:

* Brief to the Vicomte de Morogues and the Catholic Committee of Orleans.

† Brief to the President and Associates of St. Ambrose at Milan.

‡ Brief to Senator Cannart d'Hamale and the members of the federation of the Catholic circles of Belgium.

§ Complete works of Mgr. Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, vol. vii.

|| Commentary on the Bull "*Apostolicæ sedis*" of D. P. Avanzini, annexed to the "*Acta Sanctæ Sedis*," 2nd edition, p. 10.

V.

LIBERALISM RENDERS THE SERVICES OF ITS FOLLOWERS AS FATAL AS TREASON ITSELF.

In treason there are two parts, the intention and the results : the intention which makes the crime, the results which make the danger to be feared. Far from imputing to the Liberal Catholics the intention of betraying the Church, we frankly and heartily acknowledge that they desire to serve her, and that many of them have rendered her most useful services. But we affirm and will show, that the Liberal system, by which they attempt to serve her in spite of herself, produces exactly the same effects as deliberate treason.

If an officer, by refusing to execute the plan of battle laid down by his commander, exposes the army without defence to the attacks of the enemy ; if he causes disunion in the ranks ; discourages the best soldiers and demoralizes the raw recruits ; if, in fine, he refuses at the critical moment the assistance on which victory depends ;—would he not with reason be accounted a traitor ? Well ! there is not one of these causes of ruin, for which the Christian world has not now to thank Catholic Liberalism.

1st. Assuredly, if amidst her divine weakness the Church preserves invincible strength in the presence of earthly powers, she is principally indebted for the circumstance to that truth of which she is the incorruptible guardian, and to the invincible severity with which she has confessed it in presence of every tyranny. Error, on the contrary, has ever found itself weak when opposed to her, in spite of the armies at its command, because it has ever been compelled to belie itself. Now, however, thanks to Catholic Liberalism, the Church, in her struggle with anti-Christian Liberalism, has the appearance of bad faith ; whilst her adversaries ground the oppressive measures which they take against her on the pretended contradictions of their victim. In Switzerland, Germany, and England we find them justifying laws of proscription, by saying that the Church demands liberty only in order to deprive her adversaries of it as soon as their generosity shall have enabled her to persecute. But the enemies of the Church are not the only ones who bring this accusation against her. The Catholic Liberals direct it against us with an unparalleled violence of language. For instance :

“ Let us not give any one the right of raising a doubt, a suspicion, concerning the justice, delicacy, and strict loyalty of our intentions as of our actions. Let us not appear to wish to introduce ourselves into modern society by donning its colours, invoking its principles, seeking its guarantees, whilst we are the weaker party,—in order at a given time to be able to turn against the rights of our adversaries, under the pretext that error has no rights. . . . So to act is to give plausible excuse for—or rather to authorize and justify—all the exclusiveness, oppression, and iniquity, which they will think quite legitimate if they can thereby prevent us from acquiring and enjoying fully and peaceably that liberty, of which we tell them beforehand that we shall deprive them as soon as we are stronger than they. Oh ! I call upon all the honest and loyal hearts that

hear me, and especially on the youths who are to take our places in the struggle: I ask them to join with me in condemning in Catholic polemics what in public or private life would be an inexcusable dishonour." *

Let us stop here, though the impetuous orator does not stop in the development of his theme. Let us dispassionately consider the position which Liberal Catholicism occupies with regard to the Church, and of that which it forces on the Church with regard to her enemies. Let it be remembered that the doctrine, here combated with so much violence, is really that which we have seen to have been promulgated by the Sovereign Pontiffs, with the consent of the Episcopate and of all the Catholic schools; viz., that in a Christianly constituted society enjoying the inestimable benefit of religious unity, the right may not be given to error of freely combating truth. It is, then, the teaching and the conduct of the Church, which are stigmatized as "an inexcusable dishonour," and recommended to the reprobation of all honest and loyal hearts, especially of youth, which are represented as "authorizing and justifying all the exclusiveness, oppression, and iniquity" of which the Church has been the victim. Hence it follows that, since beyond possible question the Church has consistently upholden this doctrine, all this exclusiveness, oppression, and iniquity are justified in the judgment of Catholic Liberalism.

We ask: Can this manner of defending the Church have any other result than to render her odious? and is it not consequently equivalent to treason?

And to whom must be imputed the unfavourable situation in which the Church is here placed? Whose fault is it if she appears "to wish to introduce herself into modern society by donning its colours, invoking its principles, seeking its guarantees whilst she is weakest, in order at a given time to be able to turn against the rights of her adversaries?" Has *the Church herself* ever donned the colours of modern society, invoked her principles, or recognized, when weak, the rights of error? Is it not merely *Catholic Liberalism* which, arrogating to itself the right of speaking in her name, makes it appear that she plays a part against which she has never ceased to protest? Extenuating circumstances may be pleaded in its behalf, and it may be supposed sincere in thus misrepresenting the pretensions of the Church. We willingly grant this; but on condition that Catholic Liberalism will not render the Church responsible for its own error, and that, after attributing to her a capitulation which she disowns, it will not accuse of dishonour a disavowal which she considers a rigorous duty. The Church, as God's appointed witness, is capable of speaking for herself; and from the moment when the expression of her opinion ceases to be falsified, none will any longer be tempted to suspect her good faith. She will continue to carry in every age and state of civilization the message which Jesus Christ has entrusted to her; declaring to the modern world, as she did to the ancient, that truth alone can save it. Amongst enslaved as amongst free peoples, she will claim her own liberty, not as a right common to all opinions, but as the inalienable appanage of truth.

* "L'Eglise libre dans l'Etat libre," p. 136.

She will claim this liberty from those governments which proclaim unlimited liberty of thought, because her doctrine, which is the thought of God, has surely not less rights than has the thought of the most insignificant of men. But never will she utter a syllable which might expose her to the odious accusations brought against her by those, who have themselves alone furnished the ground of such accusations.

2nd. Catholic Liberalism is not satisfied with exposing the Church to the attacks of her enemies and uniting with them to aim at her the most piercing shafts. It likewise deprives her of her principal strength, by sowing division in her ranks, destroying the prestige of her chiefs, and breaking the nerve of her discipline. This is a triple evil which her most dangerous enemies could not effect; at least, not in so great a measure. However violent may be the attacks from without, the very fact of their coming from the enemy is a sufficient ground for the army to be on its guard and unite to repel them. But here is a doctrine propagated by some of the most illustrious champions of Catholic truth; here is a tactic proclaimed by the chiefs whom the army is accustomed to follow to the fight, and under whom it has gained brilliant victories. The eloquence of some, the sacred character of others, the services and the glory of all, exercise an irresistible fascination over a part of the camp. The young recruits especially, attracted by the renown of these heroes and inspired with an ardour as yet unchastened by experience, will burn to fight under their banners. Nevertheless the tactic so ardently proclaimed is contrary to the positive orders of the commander-in-chief, and to the traditions of the army; the veterans will remain immovable in their tents, and will march only at the command of him whom God Himself has placed at their head. The army will then be divided into two hostile parties; and soon a struggle within the camp will commence to the great joy of the enemy. Whichever is vanquished, some good will still accrue to them; and in both parties they find auxiliaries, so much more useful as they are more bitterly opposed to each other. The enemy well knows that, invincible of herself, truth can only give way through the fault of her defenders; that in the army of unity divisions are incomparably more fatal than any attacks.

We will abstain from depicting in more lively colours the sad reality, which is already too apparent under the veil of this allegory. The period of the Council is not so distant that we can forget the cruel divisions introduced into the Catholic camp by Liberalism; the discredit cast on the most venerable authorities; the most wicked insinuations propagated against the Vicar of Jesus Christ; the most subversive innovations opposed to the tradition of centuries; the sincerity of the mother and mistress Church exposed to the outrages of incredulity; the majesty of the Council dragged into the mud by Catholic writers; schism looming in the distance, and equally to be dreaded whether the Church define her belief or refrain from a definition. And what has been the real cause of these dangers? Must we attribute them to theological Gallicanism? We hesitate not to say "No," again and again. If there had merely been question of a theological doctrine, the storm would neither have been so long nor so violent within or without the Church. The definition of the Infallibility

would not have been received otherwise, than had been sixteen years previously that of Mary's Immaculate Conception. But behind the condemnation of Gallicanism, was seen that of Liberalism; and it was this prospect which raised up against the Council all the sincere and insincere advocates of this great modern error. Alas! we cannot but own that on this occasion Catholic Liberalism displayed neither less acrimony nor less violence, than the bitterest enemies of the Church.

ON A LETTER OF MONTALEMBERT'S.

[THE "Month" has been requested to translate a letter, which the Baron de Haulleville published in the "Revue Generale," in reference to a letter of M. de Montalembert's—and also an article of his—which have surreptitiously found their way to publication. The Count's fair name is so dear to every Catholic, that we feel we shall do good service by placing this translation before our own readers also :]

The daily papers have copied, during this month, a letter written on the 7th of November, 1869, by Count Charles de Montalembert to Dr. Dollinger, and published by the latter, in defiance of the most ordinary propriety, without the permission of Madame de Montalembert and her children, or of the executors of the will of the illustrious author.

This is a new product of a school of indiscretion, which M. Friedrich has made famous since the Vatican Council. I had occasion to see Dr. Dollinger at Munich some weeks after the composition of this letter; and I had the happiness of shaking hands with M. de Montalembert at Paris, three days before his death, besides having had the honour of receiving in numerous letters, for twelve years, the expression of his private sentiments. I shall be allowed to profit by these circumstances in making the following assertion. The judgments formed by the publishers of the letter of the 7th of November, 1869, are an outrage to the memory of one of the most illustrious defenders of our cause in this century. Certainly, the published letter bears the stamp of the well-known eloquent irritability of Charles de Montalembert, when he was enduring great sufferings; but his indignant pen brands only what he called—unjustly, perhaps—"a school of invective and oppression." There is not to be found one word of rebellion against the Church, the mother and mistress of the nations. The generous soul of the author of the *Life of Saint Elizabeth* often vented impetuous feelings, but never was it transported beyond the legitimate bounds of the *rationabile obsequium*. True, Montalembert was an "inopportunist," like almost all the German bishops, and like his brother-in-law, the late Archbishop of Melytene, that type of priestly fidelity; but before the Council this "inopportunism" was not unlawful. We must not forget that if we would be just. In the letter addressed by our friend Al. Dechamps to the Reverend Père Gratry, Montalembert's vigorous orthodoxy is asserted in the most positive terms.* We will not suffer that assertion to be profaned. A few days before the solemn hour of death, the noble author

[* See our last number, p. 504. Ed. D. R.]